Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and fourteenth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 17 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Alexey Borodavkin.....(Russian Federation)

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The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1414th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, Ms. Soliman, ladies and gentlemen, as I said at the plenary meeting on Tuesday, 14 March, and in subsequent informal discussions, I do not intend to move today to the adoption of the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.600, in view of the fact that consensus has unfortunately not yet been reached on the draft programme of work proposed by the Russian delegation.

Since this is the last plenary meeting held under the presidency of the Russian Federation, I propose to proceed as follows. I shall begin by giving the floor to delegations that wish to speak. I will then share some thoughts on the work of the Conference over the past four weeks under the presidency of the Russian Federation.

I should now like to turn to the list of speakers. The first speaker on the list is Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Group of 21. I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. The representative of Nigeria has the floor.

Mr. Amieyeofori (Nigeria): Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

> At the outset, the Group congratulates you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and expresses its appreciation for the open, transparent and efficient manner through which you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference. The Group would also like to extend its gratitude to the successive Presidents of the Conference last year for the efforts they deployed as a contribution to allow the Conference to resume substantive work, including negotiations at the earliest, and end the long impasse.
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> Mr. President, the Group of 21 would like to stress, once again, that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the Conference and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work, including, inter alia, negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 reaffirms its working papers submitted to the Conference in 2016 on nuclear disarmament, on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, on negative security assurances, on prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the work of the Conference.
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> Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The Group of 21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the Conference without further delay. As the highest priority, the Conference should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. In this context, the Group recalls its working paper contained in document CD/2063 that calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, in particular on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations of zones of peace in other regions of the world. The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the Fourth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the Fifth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC to achieve a total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace and highlights its character as the first-ever zone free of nuclear weapons, established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Group welcomes the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico in the framework of the twenty-fifth session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms its related resolution 71/71 to follow up to this meeting. As the former Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly mentioned in the Conference on Disarmament in 2015: "The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels." In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution, in particular its call for an urgent decision by the Conference to commence negotiations on nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group of 21 will make a separate statement in the Conference plenary on this issue. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard. The Group welcomes with appreciation the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly organized every year to commemorate and promote this international day, highlighting the events around the world in commemoration of this day, and calls on Governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day.

The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-Ended Working Group mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, and hopes that it would contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. To this end, the Group takes note of General Assembly resolution 71/258, on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which calls on all Member States to participate in the 2017 United Nations conference to negotiate a legally

binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States and long-standing requests by non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of concern that non-nuclear-weapon States implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear-weapon States contrary to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/75.

The Group concurs with the former United Nations Secretary-General, in his statement delivered on 23 May 2015, that there is a growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the hosting of the conferences on this subject, convened in Oslo on 4 and 5 March 2015, in Mexico on 13 and 14 February 2014 and in Vienna on 8 and 9 November 2014.

In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear-weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. The Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament through an inclusive process involving all States.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. We call on all nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear-weapon detonation, we will endeavour to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In this regard, we note the relevant resolutions adopted at the seventy-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. President, the Group of 21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of the various efforts to reach consensus on the Conference's programme of work and all subsequent decisions, efforts and proposals towards this end.

The Group reiterates the urgency for the Conference to execute its mandate as set out at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and also to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus. The Group encourages you, Mr. President, to spare no efforts and to continue wide consultations with all delegations to the Conference to achieve this goal.

The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercise political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for an early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and expresses its deep concern over the fact that the special session is yet to be convened. The Group welcomes General Assembly decision 71/551 of 23 December 2015 by which the Assembly decided that the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should submit a report on its work, including possible substantive recommendations, before the end of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and deeply regrets the delay of concrete actions to that end.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT express their disappointment and deep concern that three States parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositaries and co-sponsor States of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, including the process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as contained in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution and, in accordance with paragraph 6 of that resolution, call upon all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the Treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of accession by Israel to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. While the lack of agreement on an outcome document could undermine the NPT regime, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT emphasize the continued validity of the commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, particularly the unequivocal undertaking towards nuclear disarmament, and calls for their full implementation without further delay.

The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the Conference.

Mr. President, the Group also recognizes the importance of enhancing engagement between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, according to decisions taken by the Conference, and continues to support the strengthening of the

Conference's interaction with civil society. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum on 19 March 2015 and the second informal civil society forum on 22 June 2016.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and also for the words of support addressed to the Russian presidency from him and the Group of 21.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Ms. Bolaños Pérez (Guatemala): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. We join previous speakers in commending you and your team for the conduct of the work of the Conference over the past four weeks and for the initiatives carried out. The members of the informal group of observer States are not speaking on the merits of the draft decision presented last Tuesday, but regret that the members of the Conference could not reach consensus. We appreciate all those who worked towards the adoption of a programme of work with a view to beginning substantive work, including the delegation of the Russian Federation.

We are most disappointed that, once again, this forum was not able to adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in accordance with rule 29 of the rules of procedure. Twenty-one consecutive years of paralysis is a reminder of the fact that the Conference on Disarmament does not represent anymore an international community that demands inclusive participation in negotiations on ways to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, on disarmament in general and on collective security. The Conference on Disarmament should fulfil its crucial role of negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties according to its mandate. While the observer States recognize the efforts of the President of the Conference to break the deadlock and reach agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, the long-awaited breakthrough has not been achieved. Renewed efforts are required to reach agreement and this will continue to require substantial political will and innovative thinking from all members. What could and should be done is to increase the Conference's transparency and its accessibility. The expansion of the membership of the Conference would contribute to the inclusiveness of this body, as would the recognition of the beneficial contribution of civil society. Also, it is important to review and update the working methods of the Conference.

Mr. President, despite the backdrop, the informal group of observer States looks forward to the work of the working group on the way ahead and the opportunity this forum represents in allowing a fruitful and concrete debate on the enlargement of the Conference. The members of the informal group of observer States firmly believe that the goal of disarmament is achievable if we work pragmatically and constructively together. With that in mind, we look forward to working with all Conference members to contribute to restart the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts in the Conference that are long overdue. We would like to reiterate our strong commitment to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation goals through a comprehensive, inclusive and effective engagement within the Conference and its subsidiary organs. We encourage the upcoming presidencies of the Conference to keep making all efforts in order to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work for the current session.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Guatemala for her statement and for the words of support addressed to the Russian presidency.

I have come to the end of the list of speakers. Does anyone else wish to take the floor? I recognize Iran; you have the floor.

Mr. Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, my Ambassador was very keen to deliver a statement but, due to another urgent meeting, he had to leave. I will therefore say something on his behalf during your presidency.

Since this is the first time we are taking the floor under your presidency, at the outset we would like to convey to you, Mr. President, our warm commendation on your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and express our deep appreciation for the

very professional manner in which you have been presiding over the Conference during your tenure of office.

As to our deliberations on the programme of work, we commend your best efforts and desire and, in particular, your country's pledge to make every effort to see the adoption of a programme of work for the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament. That manifests the good intentions and genuine energy you have put into conducting consultations in a very inclusive and transparent manner on the Russian presidency's draft programme of work to take forward the work of the Conference as the single multilateral negotiating disarmament forum. We note that such a situation as putting forward a proposal by the President, which encompasses many ideas and views duly reflected in the proposal, was not an easy task. Given the intricacy of the programme of work for the Conference, we value your best efforts in showing your responsibility as the second President of the Conference on Disarmament for 2017.

Mr. President, we are convinced that the continued trend of open and transparent consultation in an exemplary manner which your delegation has resolutely followed to bring the Conference to real work would pave the way for consensual adoption of the Conference's balanced and comprehensive programme of work for this year.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: I thank the representative of Iran for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Kihurani (Kenya): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, I wish to express appreciation for the way you have been conducting the work of the Conference on Disarmament and I assure you of my delegation's continued support for your endeavours.

Kenya maintains a long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe in cooperation and dialogue and, hence, have endeavoured to make a positive contribution to global peace and disarmament processes through various multilateral forums, including this Conference, in order to help create a safer world. Our commitment to multilateralism is underpinned by a belief that common aspirations and goals cannot be achieved by a hardening of positions, narrowness of options and insistence on one's viewpoint, but rather by exercising flexibility and willingness to compromise. It is in that context that my delegation wishes to address itself to various concerns on the nuclear disarmament agenda.

It is a sad fact that the Conference has been unable to make any progress on undertaking its core responsibility — that of substantive negotiations leading to the development of treaties — for over two decades. This stark reality is what led the international community to focus its frustration on the lack of forward movement in the Conference towards the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations in 2016. This resulted ultimately in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/258, mandating a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which will commence its work at the United Nations in New York on 27 March 2017. Kenya was an active participant in the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group in Geneva last year and intends to engage in the forthcoming negotiations in New York with similar purposefulness towards the outcome, as we believe that the threat and consequences of a nuclear-weapon detonation, whether intentional or mistaken, are too dire to be left to only one option or one body to address. We see the work of the New York conference, therefore, as complementary to that of the Conference and not in competition, as the ultimate objective remains the same.

With the foregoing in mind, we reaffirm that all the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations and that all States have a duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament as well as the right to participate in disarmament negotiations. In that regard, we are convinced that discussions within the forum of a revitalized Conference on Disarmament should not only effectively incorporate the views of all States, through opening up full membership of the Conference to all United Nations Member States, but they would also be enriched through the alternative positions,

inputs and fresh insights that new members could bring on board as we pursue our shared objective of diminishing and ultimately ending the threat of nuclear weapons. We therefore advocate that the membership of this body is reviewed as soon as possible in order to facilitate its enlargement to a universal one.

We acknowledge the importance of the Conference in considering the development of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work while ensuring undiminished security for all States, pursuant to the agenda adopted by the first special session on disarmament in 1978 and, in particular, taking into account the four core issues of nuclear disarmament, a ban on the production of fissile material, negative security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space in line with various General Assembly resolutions. Indeed, for my delegation, comprehensive nuclear disarmament continues to be a priority. However, it is a fact that new developments in science and advances in technology have brought with them new and increased threats to international security. It would be remiss of the Conference to be caught in a time warp and fail to consider and engage itself in developing norms and strategies to tackle those threats, particularly if there is no other international intergovernmental body actively and directly engaged in tackling that threat.

In that regard, Mr. President, I wish to commend the delegation of the Russian Federation for the work and the lengths to which they have gone in presenting a draft programme of work for the 2017 session and the consultations, both formal and informal, which you have undertaken with a view to achieving consensus on it. Having reviewed the proposal, my delegation had a number of observations on the same, but in the light of the President's decision not to table the proposal due to lack of consensus, I will spare the meeting the details of our views on the proposal. Nevertheless, my delegation remains committed to seeing the work of the Conference move forward in the interest of global safety and security and, further, in the interest of getting the Conference back to substantive work.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: I thank the representative of Kenya for his statement, his words of support and his words of appreciation for the Russian presidency.

Is there anyone else wishing to speak? I see no one. If there is no one wishing to take the floor, please allow me now to share some thoughts on the four weeks of the Russian presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, with today's meeting, Russia concludes its presidency of the Conference. During these four weeks, we successfully hosted the main political event of the year at the Conference: an extremely impressive high-level segment. There were two dozen high-level guest speakers. On the whole, the segment went well and there was a positive atmosphere in the search for solutions to the long-standing issues of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control and disarmament, with the emphasis on relaunching the work of the Conference.

One other important event also took place. On the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the Second Hague Peace Conference, a special thematic meeting of the Conference on Disarmament was held and the participants were addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov. The meeting, which was attended by representatives of States, international organizations, academia and civil society, attracted a great deal of interest and was reported on in the media.

However, the Russian presidency has focused most of its efforts on resolving the most important problem facing the Conference: agreeing on a programme of work. We deployed all available options and formats, such as weekly plenary meetings, a meeting of the six Presidents for the 2017 session and coordinators of the regional groups. We held three rounds of informal consultations in plenary and also separate targeted discussions with the Western Group and the Group of 21. There were numerous bilateral consultations, including contacts with the Chair of the working group on the way ahead.

In our work in the presidency, we did our best to learn the lessons of the past, which, effectively, gave us no choice: that is, instead of embarking on the vicious circle of traditional agendas, which had been unsuccessful for 21 years, we decided to try to

introduce a new topical issue that would address the security interests of every single member of the Conference.

We looked at the growing threat of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction. After all, the use by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist groups of toxic materials or other chemical warfare agents as weapons has become a tragic reality of our times. Moreover, the mechanisms that were intended to prevent access by non-State actors to chemical weapons have unfortunately not worked. What is more, terrorists have actually stepped up their production.

That is why, as you know, we put forward a proposal to the Conference last year on drafting a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism. Later, on the advice of interested delegations, we added biological terrorism to its scope. We submitted to the Conference a draft of elements of a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, together with an explanatory note and other relevant materials. Substantial improvements were made to our initiative, which gained a lot of supporters.

Of course, in the course of our presidency, and before it started, we heard a lot of doubts, and even objections, about the proposed draft convention. Some people talked about the risk that the draft convention would duplicate the Biological Weapons Convention, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other instruments of international law. Others even seemed to suggest that the draft convention would undermine these international law instruments.

In our opinion, these fears are far-fetched. The only way to get rid of them is for everyone to work together to go through the text of the draft convention in a focused manner, article by article, comparing it with other documents and putting in such corrections as Conference members may consider necessary.

In fact, that is precisely the approach we set out in the draft programme of work of the Conference. We offered to start on drafting the basic elements of the new convention. However, some delegations turned out to be unwilling to contemplate even this very moderate approach. Not only that, but, judging by their statements, some even started to predict, for some reason, that negotiations over the draft convention would drag on for years. It is not clear what such pessimistic predictions are based on. After all, the draft convention would not be a comprehensive agreement like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or the Chemical Weapons Convention, but a short and fairly specific document. As we see it, just a few weeks of intensive work by the Conference would be enough to draw up a substantial text.

I should also like to recall that the Russian delegation provided exhaustive replies, orally and in writing, to all the serious questions that were asked about the proposed convention and proved that the doubts and objections did not hold water. Everyone saw and heard the arguments. But it seems that not everyone wanted to agree with them. It is truly a great pity.

Distinguished colleagues, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, we did everything within our power to garner a consensus on the programme of work of the Conference. Where we could, we took into account the ideas and concerns of all colleagues. In our view, the draft programme of work set out in document CD/WP.600 provides an excellent basis for compromise. The document remains on the table and we would like to hope that subsequent Presidents will be able to use it in their work. For our part, we stand ready to offer them the fullest cooperation, so that 2017 does not become yet another year of lost opportunities for the Conference.

In conclusion, I should like to thank particularly those delegations — and they are the majority — who were ready to accept the draft programme of work prepared by the Russian presidency. We are grateful for the cooperation of the Chair of the working group on the way ahead, Ambassador Htin Lynn, the other colleagues who presided over the Conference on Disarmament this year, the coordinators of the regional groups and all delegations, and also the secretariat and the interpreters for their assistance with our work. We are very grateful to them all.

I see the representative of Myanmar wishes to take the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Lynn (Myanmar): First and foremost, Mr. President, I commend the dedication and efforts that you and your delegation have put into reviving the Conference on Disarmament and to bringing it back to where it belongs, as entrusted by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Document CD/WP.600, in my view, has been a useful litmus test in our quest for identifying common ground for a programme of work with a negotiating mandate. For my part, I will continue to try to fulfil my mandate as entrusted by document CD/2090 of 17 February. So far, I have met with 26 delegations out of 65. I will continue to conduct bilateral and multilateral consultations and with all groups of the Conference in future and, of course, as soon as possible. I thank all delegations who have made themselves available for such consultations. After a good round of consultations, I will be closely interacting with the presidency and the other five Presidents of the session with a view to finding a possible future line of action. So far, I can only promise you that my delegation and I will spare no efforts to fulfil my mandate as you have entrusted to me.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Myanmar for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Russian presidency.

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? If not, we will conclude our work for today. The next plenary meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 21 March, under the presidency of the Ambassador of Senegal.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.